

## **Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 17 October 2011**

### **Questions from Mrs E Morawiecka**

Can you please forward these questions to the overview and scrutiny committee meeting on Monday 17th October 2011 regarding to the current LDF consultation.

1. Herefordshire Council commenced a new round of consultation on Monday 26th September with their leaflet "Help Plan the Future of Herefordshire". A presentation was made to parish councillors of the Credenhill ward on Thursday 6th October. No members of the public were allowed. The parish councillors requested that to widen public participation it would be most effective if officers were able to attend public meetings, which the parish councils offered to organise. This offer had been made before the consultation started but the offer has been refused by officers and this was reiterated on Thursday. Officers will only attend drop in sessions between 3pm and 7pm on a weekday. If this is a public consultation, whilst I appreciate the cost constraints the council are under, surely officers ought to consider attending at least a few public meetings to provide an opportunity to engage with local residents and to hear and record their views on the revised preferred option?

2. Herefordshire Council has no dates organised to explain the revised preferred option to members of the public, why is this? Surely this precludes residents living aware from information points or who have no access to the internet?

3. At the meeting a number of concerns were raised about the LDF leaflet recently published:-

a). Whilst Rotherwas has been declared an Enterprise Zone by central government it is not referred to or shown on the map in the leaflet as an area of employment growth. Why?

b). The housing figures are only shown as comparisons against the Preferred Option from 2010. This is misleading to the public as it would indicate a cut in housing figures, when in fact Hereford is expected to grow at a rate of 147% what has been experienced in the last 15 years. Is this realistic in the current economic climate?

c) The meeting was informed that the "relief" road for Hereford would not be complete until 2031 and no costs or sources of revenue for this infrastructure project were available at this stage, despite this information being a pre-requisite to the road being an element of the Core Strategy. Surely, by including the western relief road with no supporting information on delivery, financing or costing this puts the entire core strategy at risk?

d). The leaflet is to be printed in the next edition of Herefordshire Matters. Will it provided fuller background information on the new Revised preferred option than that currently given in the leaflet and will other organisations be able to advertise in this edition?

### **Response to Questions submitted by Mrs Morawiecka to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 17 October 2011**

1 and 2: the main focus of the consultation in terms of meetings has been on the delivery of ward-based consultations with the Parish Councils and the City/market town councils. Some 30 such meetings have been arranged over the consultation period, the intent being to use this established level of local government as a means of seeking local views. The question of whether this needs to be supplemented by other steps such as public meetings or drop-in events is being considered at a meeting of the LDF member working group on Thursday 20th October.

3(a): the announcement of the Enterprise Zone followed on from Cabinet's consideration of the principles of the Revised Preferred Option in July. Further consideration will be given to this matter in progressing the plan, having regard to consultation responses, and including any potential implications in respect of employment land and infrastructure requirements. The latter may include additional transport links to the east of Hereford, including a river crossing. A reference to this position is set out within the background paper to the consultation.

3(b): As the leaflet sets out the revised preferred option it is reasonable that it compares the revised proposals with the preferred options from 2010. In this regard it is not accepted that the leaflet is misleading. In respect of the point regarding an increase in growth proposed at Hereford compared to previous house building rates, one of the main stated elements of the Core Strategy has always been to focus upon Hereford as the most sustainable location for new development and it has always been made clear that this will be at an increased rate to that proposed by the UDP. The last 15 years saw a relatively restricted release of housing land at Hereford (partly because of infrastructure constraints) and with the UDP not being adopted until 2007 this also limited the release of some of the allocated sites to later in the UDP period. However, if the rate of proposed housing completions is compared to that experienced in the late 1980's and early 1990's, a time when (just as proposed in the revised preferred option) significant greenfield releases were made, such as at Belmont, Lower Bullingham and Holmer, the housing completion rate was significantly higher. It is recognised that the housing market is currently undergoing a significant downturn but it is to be expected that over a 20-year plan period there will be an increased need and demand for new housing.

3(c): the relief road is an important component of the overall strategy and more detail on its delivery including funding will be set out within the submitted Core Strategy.

3(d): the next edition of Herefordshire Matters will include a two page feature based on the current consultation leaflet. It has been suggested that the question relating to other organisations being able to advertise within this publication could be considered at the LDF working group referred to above, and a response given them.

### **Question from Pat Churchward**

In view of the fact that the LDF needs to show 'soundness' when it is submitted to the Secretary of State, and evidence that alternatives to proposals in the LDF have been tested, could the Committee please as a matter of urgency consider the subject of 'The absence of a transport model of a 'No Road' option in the draft LDF' and urge the cabinet and its officers to undertake such a model immediately?

I understand this may be submitted too late for the meeting today, but I would like this question to be addressed, documented and responded to as soon as possible please.

### **Response**

The 'no road' option was tested In the 2009 Hereford Multi Modal Model and again in the 2010 Study of Options. The Study of Options also included modelling of 3 strategic sustainable transport packages and each was tested with east and west relief roads and with

no road. The conclusion of this work was that none of the strategic sustainable transport options would deliver the traffic capacity required to support the proposals for growth on their own. Importantly, the modelling concluded that either relief road option performed best alongside a package of sustainable measures.